atmosphere. Whilst on this subject, we may refer to the desirableness of promoting by every means the provision of pure air, particularly for the poorer classes, a subject recently taken up with effect in the promotion of public walks and parks. The squares and parks of London have been emphatically called its lungs, and in order that the overgrown metropolis may breathe more freely, it is necessary that the surface of these lungs should be increased to keep pace with its growing dimensions. By so doing, not only do we supply pure air to the inhabitants, but we invite their attention to exercise, to moral improvement, and to the bettering of their social condition.

The free currents of air which are necessarily in constant circulation from its proximity to the majestic Thames, and the storms which destroy the equilibrium of the atmosphere by putting in motion its elements, have been considered (and not improperly) as a great cause of the salubrity of the metropolis. Amongst other conservative agents in its purification, there is no doubt but that of watering the streets is one, from the quantities of water distributed throughout the atmosphere in its evaporation. This as it ascends will carry up with it into the atmosphere, and above the reach of mischief, the various decomposing and decomposed organic matters floating about, and which otherwise allowed to remain, would be productive of contagious miasms. We recognize the additional purity or freshness of the atmosphere by following a watering-cart as we do after a shower of rain, and the same effect is recognized in a newly-cleansed or scoured room. Here, independent of the influence of the brush in removing substances, the decomposition of which would fill the atmosphere with impurities, the evaporation of the water would produce the same effects as in watering the streets, in cleansing the air of the room. This shews the necessity of an adequate supply of water being provided for purposes of cleanliness, a deficiency too palpable in the crowded courts and habitations of the poorer classes. In watering the streets, we may observe the obnoxious practice which has been pursued in some districts in the use of the water accumulated in the sewers, which must be highly objectionable in the diffusion of noxious malaria.

The general use of wood paving may justify an inquiry into the circumstances as to how far its adoption may not be injurious to public health. No doubt can be entertained of the prejudicial effects resulting from the accumulation of decayed and decaying organic matters in the streets, giving rise as they do to various gaseous and volatile compounds, and the removal of which is most desirable; nor of the injury to property, from the dust given off by the abrasure of granite or stones. When the blocks are taken up for repair, they will be seen to be impregnated for some inches below with black matters absorbed from the surface, consisting of decomposing organic matters. The wood is likewise susceptible of absorbing water, which it may retain in its pores, or in the interstices, and when dry weather supervenes, this will necessarily evaporate, carrying with it in solution into the atmosphere the volatile matters given off from these organic compounds. In this view I am supported by Dr. Copland, who, at a recent meeting of the Westminster Medical Society, gave it as his opinion that the general use of wood pavement would have a tendency to maintain and propagate that low form of typhoid fever which has recently been so prevalent in the metropolis, and almost defied the treatment of medical men.

St. Thomas's-square, Hackney,
July 1st, 1844.

WINDOW DUTIES.

To the Right Hon. the Earl of Lincoln.

My Lord,—With every disposition to give your lordship credit for sincerity, in your endeavours to reform the Building-Act, or rather to put the laws relating to buildings in unison with the spirit of the age, I must beg to call your lordship's attention to a subject affecting the sanatory condition of the inhabitants of large towns, an object deemed of the greatest importance by all right-thinking persons, and not only felt by yourself in common with many of your colleagues, but openly avowed by your lordship: and here I would awaken your lordship's attention to the fact, that the proposition I am about to submit is not calculated to cause any material diminution of revenue, if any, and would confer a boon on thousands—indeed a boon so great, that it would more than outbalance a hundred-fold any trifling diminution of revenue. The proposition I have to submit is, a slight amendment of the Window Duties Act, by extending the exemption to *ten* windows, instead of *seven*; and this, although asked on the part of the poor and the humblest of the middle classes, might be equitably extended to houses of every class, on the first ten windows. I would remind your lordship that persons in affluent circumstances do not pay as rent more than *one-tenth* of their income, whereas the description of persons above alluded to pay more than a *fifth* of their income for rent, and, in innumerable cases, very much more. Most persons know that the smallest six-roomed houses require, for their comfortable occupation, at least *nine* windows, namely, *one to each room*, one over the door, and *two* to the staircase; this, I say, my lord, is the *least* number of windows that should exist to a house of such a description, and yet it is a notorious and a melancholy fact, that not more than one house, in one hundred of this nature, has more than *seven* windows, that being the number allowed by the exemption clause. Your lordship and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I saw by a report in the newspapers, required (from a deputation on the window duties, who waited upon you) information as to the sanatory condition of the poor in other countries.

Now, my lord, I will state one fact, fearlessly defying contradiction, that in France, where a window-tax exists, there is not in that country one single window less than would have been if no duty existed, and this is owing to the moderate scale of the duties. And on one of the occasions when I was in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, a member having incidentally stated he had understood that an enormous quantity of windows were *bricked up* in England, owing to the excessive duties, the assertion was received by the members with incredulity; nor was it believed till the minister, who had been appealed to, confirmed the fact—"*They manage these things better in France.*" Perhaps it may be owing to the *second article* of the French Charter of July, 1830, which declares, "*That all persons shall contribute to the necessities of the state, in proportion to their means.*" To put the window duties on a rational and equitable footing would be worthy of any ministry, and is necessary before the pretended anxiety for the public health will be considered other than as *cant and humbug*. Allowing the exemption on ten windows for every house, great and small, I would impose a duty of *five shillings* on every window above that number. Why, my lord, should the eighth window of a house, broken out to make it *barely habitable*, be subject to a duty of *sixteen shillings and sixpence*, and all windows above 180 be liable to *one shilling and sixpence only?* Perhaps your lordship may some day receive the answer from the ten-pound voters, refusing to intrust *any ministry* with a tax alike destructive to our domestic architecture, private morals, and the public health.

I have the honour to be, my lord, your obedient servant, A Looker-On.

London, June 19.

P. S.—No *zinc plate* expedient will answer, as a greater flood of *light* is required, as well as ventilation, to prevent the accumulation of filth and dirt, the natural resting-places for which are *dark* corners.

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, WESTMINSTER.

To the Inhabitants of St. Margaret's, Westminster.

Gentlemen,—Permit me to call your attention to the fact, that efforts are still being made to effect the destruction of your venerable parish church, and to remove it from the site it has occupied for 790 years. I much fear a committee of the House of Commons was prevailed upon yesterday, the 4th July, to recommend this scheme of church desecration.

I have, in my works on church building and on Westminster improvement, and by other means, endeavoured to expose the shallow pretexts of the destructionists; and, as I have brought over some of the most influential persons to my views, I flattered myself that my efforts had been successful, when, to my astonishment, a letter appeared a short time since in The Builder, announcing "the pleasing intelligence"—the pleasing intelligence!—"that St. Margaret's Church was immediately to be pulled down and rebuilt on another site, *both which, and funds for the purpose, had been obtained.*"

Let me epitomise the reasons against this measure which I have given elsewhere at length: "That persons greatly err who would regulate Gothic architecture on Greek principles;" "that Gothic architecture does not exhibit itself naked and bare;" "that it delights in bold, striking, and picturesque irregularities"—"veiling itself with walls and screens and towers;" "therefore appears best as an accumulation of buildings;" "therefore, the abbey church and St. Margaret's gain by juxtaposition," "while the grandeur of the ancient edifice is increased by comparison with the more modern structure which stands beside it;" "that when the new palace of legislature is completed, St. Margaret's will be absolutely necessary to effect a harmonious union between that and the abbey;" "that St. Edward did not think the position of St. Margaret's would injure the effect of his darling abbey church;" "that its removal would involve the destruction of another of history's landmarks, a document of stone which cannot lie, attesting the antiquity of your parish;" "that instead of your venerable temple, founded by St. Edward, rebuilt by Edward I., and again by Edward IV., you would probably get a mere brick and plaster apology, on a par with those vulgar modern churches which are the laughing-stock of ecclesiologists." But is mere taste, or rather the want of it, fit to be put in competition with the desecration of a spot on which your ancestors worshipped for nearly eight centuries? Or are ye on these matters below that nation of savages who, when urged to emigrate, replied, "But what shall we do with the bones of our forefathers?"

Inhabitants of Westminster, rouse yourselves to resist the architectural barbarians. Your ancestors rose *en masse*, and successfully resisted the Protector Somerset and his myrmidons, when they attempted the destruction of St. Margaret's. The present most excellent Dean and your gifted Rector are utterly opposed to the project of removal; put yourselves under their legitimate guidance. "Remove not St. Margaret's, *restore it to its pristine beauty as left to ye by the illustrious Edward,*" and you will never more hear the senseless cry of removing St. Margaret's to obtain a better view of the Abbey Church. Perhaps the best of all methods to unite St. Margaret's with the Minster would be the erection of a tomb-house, or cloister, for the reception of those mural monuments which disfigure the interior of the Abbey Church, the expense of which the accession of new monuments would probably defray. As an architectural antiquary, I have now done my duty, let the guardians of the fabric do theirs.

Park-street, July 5. William Bardwell

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

June 20.—Richard Yates, Esq., of St. Andrew's hill, Doctors' Commons, was elected a Fellow of the society.

Mr. Brown exhibited a small seated idol of pure gold, found on the margin of the lake of Guatavite, situated on the summit of a ridge of mountains about eight leagues from Santa Fé de Bogota, the capital of Columbia. This lake, previously to the conquest of New Granada by the Spaniards, was by the natives of that country considered sacred, and they were accustomed at certain periods to throw into it their treasures as offerings to their deities. The scenery around the lake is magnificently romantic, and well calculated to make a powerful impression on the human mind. By the remains still to be seen of extensive works, it is evident that various attempts had been made by the Spaniards to drain the lake, and it is on record that about eighty years ago so much gold was got out, that the quinto to the crown amounted to upwards of eighty thousand dollars. At that time also an emerald of immense value was found, and sent to Madrid. A company has of late been formed in Bogota for the express purpose of effectually sinking the lake, and from the judicious measures

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